

Winman Area

Redistricting/Consolidation

Subcommittee

Minutes

January 24, 2008

Committee members present: Richard D'Agostino, William Sangster, Jillian Saytes, Donna Murgo. Absent: Cherie Nickerson.

Dr. D'Agostino addressed the members of the public who had shown up for the meeting explaining that it was in fact a subcommittee and that while anyone was welcome to listen to the proceedings, it was not a forum for public questions or comments. The meeting was moved to a larger room to accommodate the large number of people and was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

An examination of the Winman feeder schools discussed focusing on the following five topics:

- a. Current enrollment**
- b. Student capacity**
- c. Current usage by percent**
- d. Consolidation availability by number of students**
- e. School operating efficiency by percent**

The committee discussed that to maximize the use of any school at 100% would limit the flexibility in the building. Research has shown that schools run most efficiently at 90% usage.

Cedar Hill was discussed. They show their current usage at 73%. When the two (2) empty rooms were factored in it lowered the usage to 67%. Their numbers show there are 139 available slots. Potowomut, with its' 99 students (and the 11 Potowomut kindergarten students already at Cedar Hill) could be consolidated at Cedar Hill making the school usage 86%. If this plan was acted on. further information concerning numbers of students in individual grades would need to be looked at in more detail.

Drum Rock was shown to be operating at 90% building usage and therefore could not take additional students and would not be considered for consolidation.

Greenwood school is currently at 77% usage with an enrollment of 273. If it took 12 kindergarten students and 37 (grades 1-6) students it would bring its' capacity up to 90%.

Potowomut School is currently at 43% building usage with an enrollment of 99 and an additional eleven (11) kindergarten students already attending Cedar Hill. Their forecast for the 2008-2009 school year shows only eight (8) first graders. The question of bussing was brought up but the committee felt that it would not be a big problem

since students from the Potowomut area are already bussed to Cedar Hill, Winman Junior High School and Toll Gate High School.

A break was taken and Dr. D'Agostino again addressed the public and gave them more information about the process that is taking place and where they could look for notice of further meetings. The audience was concerned they were not allowed to speak and he assured them before any action was taken they would be given this opportunity. He reiterated the fact that subcommittees are directed by the superintendent to look at different scenarios and report back to the District Wide Committee. No decisions were made at this level.

The meeting reconvened at 3:50 p.m.

Robertson School was shown to be operating at 63% capacity. If they were to take 15 kindergarten students, an additional 75 elementary (1-6) students and 12 special education students they would be operating at 91% building usage.

Scott School operates at 73% usage. Although room was available at this school for additional students the committee felt its' location would not be conducive for consolidation with any Wickes students. The bus ride would be long and inconvenient for students. As a result, the remaining schools available to consolidate students in the Winman feeder area were Greenwood and Robertson. The conclusion was that Wickes 301 students could not be absorbed into

Winman feeder area schools if Potowomut was consolidated with Cedar Hill School at the same time. If both schools were to be consolidated it would mean crossing district lines.

A committee member asked if the question if the airport expansion would take so many homes that Wickes School be closed because of lack of enrollment. This was discussed at the December 19th meeting. It was noted at that time that an estimated 300 homes would be affected if the expansion took a southern direction. In this case Wickes would likely be put in the same position as Potowomut School of having too few students.

The committee looked at a map of the city that showed Warwick City Schools. Dr. D'Agostino told the committee that he had spoken to Steve O'Haire (the school transportation manager) and he agreed that Scott School should not be considered into the consolidation of Wickes School.

A discussion ensued about whether families would be split and sent to different elementary schools because of class size and the committee felt strongly that this should not be considered. If, in fact, schools were consolidated the entire family would attend the new school. The City of Providence has a practice of sending students to schools where there is room and no consideration is giving to keeping siblings together. The committee would not recommend this become a practice in Warwick.

The committee noted that many parents were uncomfortable with the change in district lines. Mainly that if some students were absorbed into Lippitt they would no longer be going on to Winman/Toll Gate. It was decided they would ask the superintendent and the full committee if it were possible for those students to go on to Winman/Toll Gate as opposed to Gorton/Veterans.

In answer to the question “Can Wickes School be consolidated into Winman Feeder Schools?” the committee answer was no.

Could Wickes students be consolidated into other feeder schools the answer was yes.

It was also decided that Potowomut could be absorbed by Cedar Hill but closing two (2) schools in the Winman Feeder area would not allow all students to stay in the area. In fact some students would need to be absorbed by Lippitt which would move them to the Gorton/Veterans area. Because Lippitt borders the Wickes area it could pick up 100 students. In addition, it was noted that Gorton currently has the smallest junior high population.

One positive point of consolidating is the chance of having split classes is greatly decreased. The committee saw this as a beneficial point.

Wickes numbers were again discussed. This year 50-55 students will be leaving the school, but only 27 will be coming in. There has been a drop of approximately 60 students at that school over the last several years.

In conclusion the committee decided on the following:

- 1. It was possible for Cedar Hill School to absorb the students from Potowomut.**
- 2. It was not possible for Wickes School to close and keep all students in Winman feeder schools.**
- 3. It was possible for Wickes to close and send students to other feeder schools.**
- 4. It would like to recommend that those students not staying in a Winman feeder school be given the option of going onto the Winman/Toll Gate area.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.